

Message Text

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PAGE 01 OTTAWA 04735 182208Z

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ACTION EUR-12

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SUBJ: MEDIA COVERAGE OF GOC REACTION TO AMBASSADOR
PORTER'S REMARKS TO JOURNALISTS

REF: OTTAWA 4726

ENGLISH-LANGUAGE MORNING PRESS DEC 18 CONTINUES COVERAGE
ALONG LINES REPORTED REFTEL. PRINCIPAL EDITORIAL COMMENT
CONTAINED IN FOLLOWING GLOBE AND MAIL COLUMN BY GEOFFREY
STEVENS ENTITLED "THE SUBSTANCE WAS LOST":

BEGIN QUOTE:

WHAT WITH ALL THE FLAP OVER WHAT THE PRESS SAID AMBASSADOR
WILLIAM PORTER SAID ABOUT WHAT PEOPLE IN THE UNITED STATES
HAVE SAID (OR ARE SAYING OR THINKING) ABOUT THINGS THAT
ARE BEING SAID (OR DONE) IN CANADA, THE SUBSTANCE OF THE
MATTER SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN LOST. IF YOU FOLLOW ME.
FOR SOME REASON, THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA CHOSE TO
ATTACK AMBASSADOR PORTER'S CREDIBILITY, TO QUESTION HIS
STATUS AS A SPOKESMAN FOR HIS COUNTRY, TO ASSERT THAT
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PAGE 02 OTTAWA 04735 182208Z

CANADA IS NOT A COLONY OF THE UNITED STATES (WHO

SUGGESTED IT WAS?). A MORE MATURE REACTION WOULD HAVE BEEN FOR PRIME MINISTER PIERRE TRUDEAU EITHER TO HAVE IGNORED MR. PORTER (PRIME MINISTERS DON'T HAVE TO ANSWER TO FOREIGN AMBASSADORS) OR TO HAVE ADDRESSED HIMSELF DIRECTLY TO THE COMMENTS MADE BY THE AMBASSADOR. A RESPECTABLE REBUTTAL COULD HAVE BEEN MADE TO JUST ABOUT EVERYTHING MR. PORTER SAID.

FOR EXAMPLE, MR. PORTER WOULD HAVE A TOUGH TIME SUPPORTING HIS ARGUMENT THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES HAVE DETERIORATED IN THE PAST COUPLE OF YEARS. THE TRUDEAU GOVERNMENT COULD MAKE A PRETTY GOOD CASE THAT, WHILE SOME OF THE PROBLEMS ARE DIFFERENT, THE RELATIONSHIP HAS NOT ON BALANCE CHANGED APPRECIABLY. SOME OF THE OLD IRRITANTS HAVE ABATED (FOR EXAMPLE, AGRICULTURAL TRADE). SOME NEW ONES HAVE APPEARED (TRANS-BORDER TELEVISION, SASKATCHEWAN'S TAKEOVER OF THE POTASH INDUSTRY). SOME ARE STILL WITH US (THE GARRISON DIVERSION, WHICH BOTHERS CANADA; CANADIAN POLLUTION OF THE FLATHEAD RIVER, WHICH BOTHERS THE AMERICANS). AND SOME IRRITANTS HAVE REVERSED DIRECTION (UNTIL RELATIVELY RECENTLY THE CANADA-U.S. AUTO PACT WAS REGARDED AS AN IRRITANT BY THE AMERICANS; NOW, GIVEN'S CANADA'S TRADE DEFICIT IN AUTO PARTS, IT IS MORE OF AN IRRITANT ON THIS SIDE OF THE BORDER). SOME OF THE THINGS MR. PORTER MENTIONED COULD BE DEALT WITH BY RECITING FACTS. HE MADE THE POINT THAT THE UNITED STATES HAD ACCEPTED, WITH SOME SKEPTICISM, CANADA'S CONTENTION THAT IT NEEDED TO IMPOSE AN EXPORT TAX ON WESTERN CANADIAN OIL IN ORDER TO FINANCE THE SUBSIDY ON IMPORTED OIL IN EASTERN CANADA. HIS IMPLICATION WAS THAT THE U.S. REALLY THINKS THE TAX IS JUST A REVENUE-PRODUCING MEASURE. THE FACTS ARE QUITE THE OPPOSITE. AT ONE POINT, THE SUBSIDY WAS COSTING OTTAWA \$1 MILLION A DAY MORE THAN THE EXPORT TAX WAS YIELDING.

THE AMBASSADOR SPOKE OF THE PROBLEM CREATED FOR AMERICAN BROADCASTERS BY CANADIAN RADIO-TELEVISION COMMISSION RULES ON THE DELETION OF COMMERCIALS FROM

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 OTTAWA 04735 182208Z

U.S. SIGNALS DISTRIBUTED BY CANADIAN CABLEVISION COMPANIES. THE REPLY: CANADA AGREED SOME TIME AGO TO DISCUSS THE MATTER AT A MEETING SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY 13.

ON THE QUESTION OF FOREIGN INVESTMENT, MR. PORTER MADE THE POINT THAT U.S. CAPITAL USED TO BE WELCOME IN CANADA; IT WAS EVEN ENCOURAGED. NOW, CANADA HAS A FOREIGN IN-

VESTMENT REVIEW PROCEDURE. U.S. BUSINESS IS UNCERTAIN ABOUT THE RULES AND INVESTMENTS ARE NOT BEING MADE. FINE. BUT IT COULD BE POINTED OUT THAT THERE ARE EXCELLENT REASONS FOR THE LEGISLATION, THAT CANADA HAS BEEN ALTOGETHER TOO DEPENDENT ON U.S. CAPITAL, THAT THE GOVERNMENT BELIEVES IN THE PRINCIPLE OF CANADIAN OWNERSHIP, AND THAT THE LEGISLATION DOES NOT, IN ANY EVENT, DISCRIMINATE AGAINST U.S. INVESTMENT VIS-A-VIS INVESTMENT FROM OTHER FOREIGN SOURCES.

MR. PORTER SUGGESTED AN EARLY MEETING BETWEEN MR. TRUDEAU AND PRESIDENT GERALD FORD. IF THE PRIME MINISTER DOESN'T SEE ANY NEED FOR A MEETING RIGHT NOW, FINE. SAY SO. SURELY, THE OBSERVATIONS MADE BY THE AMBASSADOR WERE ONES THAT WERE REASONABLE FOR HIM TO MAKE. SOME MAY BE VALID, OTHERS NOT, BUT ALL CAN BE EXAMINED CALMLY. ONE WOULD HAVE MORE RESPECT FOR OUR GOVERNMENT'S CONDUCT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS IF IT COULD GET OVER ITS PARANOIA TOWARD THE UNITED STATES. CANADA WANTS TO BE REGARDED IN THE WORLD AS A MATURE, SOVEREIGN NATION ABLE TO STAND ON ITS OWN TWO FEET (ALL OF WHICH IS TRUE). WE DON'T HESITATE TO LASH THE AMERICANS WHENEVER WE FEEL THEY HAVE DONE US WRONG. BUT WHY DO WE FLY INTO A TIZZY WHEN THE AMERICANS TELL US THEY DON'T AGREE WITH EVERYTHING WE ARE DOING? IT WAS JUVENILE TO RUN TO THE WHITE HOUSE AND TO HENRY KISSINGER TO HAVE OUR HAND HELD. IT WAS DOWN-RIGHT CHILDISH--AND CHURLISH--FOR OUR CABINET MINISTERS TO BOYCOTT MR. PORTER'S FAREWELL COCKTAIL PARTY.

IF WE WANT TO BE TREATED LIKE ADULTS, WE OUGHT TO START ACTING LIKE ADULTS. END QUOTE. JOHNSON

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